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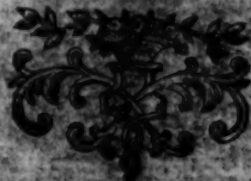
THE
EXPERIMENT.

A
F A R C E

OF
T W O A C T S.

By C. MURRAY, *K*
OF THE THEATRE-ROYAL IN NORWICH.

LEGE, SED PARCE.



NORWICH: Printed by J. CROOK, 1779.



INTRODUCTION.

SOMETHING is generally expected by the world, by way of preface, to prepare the piece for public reception; wishing to live in obscurity, I wave that custom, and only return my sincere thanks to those performers, who so kindly accepted parts so very inadequate to their merits.

C. MURRAY.

INTRODUCTION

SOME OF THE
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C. MURRAY

PROLOGUE.

Written by a Friend, and spoken by Mr. MURRAY.

OURS is a scheming age—for once the actor
Assumes another trade, and turns projector!
No deep-laid plot, no Mississippi chouse,
Mine is a simple scheme—to fill the House.
If you applaud, the Experiment's *probatum*;
If not—don't damn it, call it an *erratum*.

You've had your project too*—when drooping age
Shall seek retirement from the bustling stage;
When long exertion shall have damp'd our fires,
And the faint Lear some filial prop requires;
For us, your bounty form'd the noblest scheme,
No trivial benefit, no golden dream;
Reason approv'd, compassion hail'd the deed,
And the muse bade the Experiment succeed.

When first Thalia's sons aspir'd to fame,
An author and an actor were the same;
And till old Thespis in his waggon stroll'd,
Without a prompter's aid each actor droll'd:
His subject varied as he chang'd his place,
'Twas declamation now, and now grimace:
When wit was wanting, mimic powers he try'd,
And what the poet lack'd, the droll supply'd.

The Drama now a different mode ordains,
And actors nurse the brats of *others* brains:
Nay more—at each new play, in accents mild,
Some fav'rite Roscius answers for the child;

By

* This alludes to the play lately performed at Norwich by Gentlemen, for instituting a fund for the support of decayed actors,

P R O L O G U E.

By all that's pitiful conjures the audit,
To hear the composition, and applaud it:
The scheme succeeds, pit, box, and gallery-roar,
And thus on actors wings the authors soar.

To-night, this modern practice I disown,
My task's to introduce a brain-child of my own;
Myself the sponfor here, I ask no proxies,
Unless some Roscius answers from the boxes.
Critics, I charge ye, as ye honour wit,
To overlook for once the want of it;
You cannot damn me—for my benefit.
Without this privilege, I'd risk your fury;
What can the author fear—from such a jury?



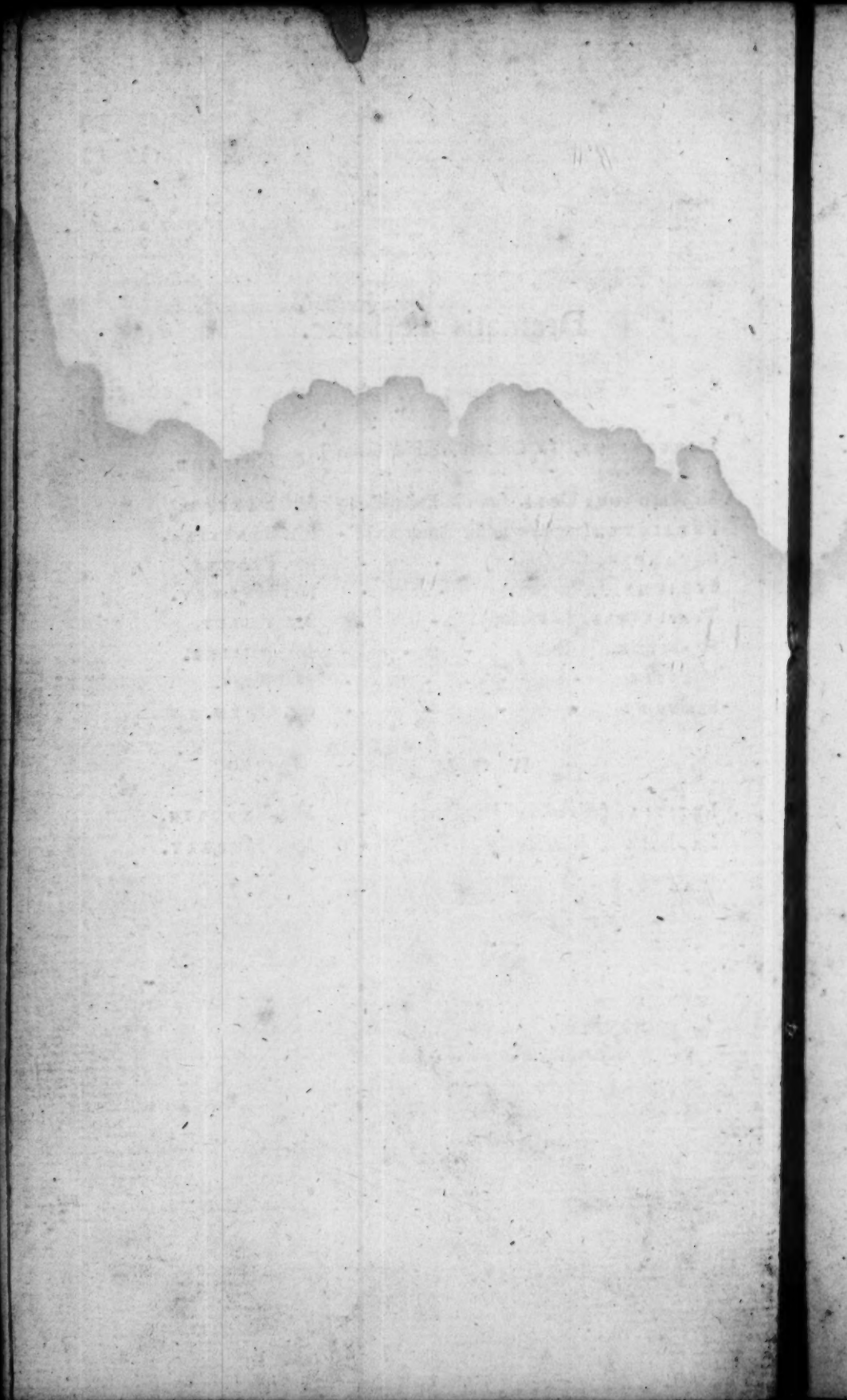
Dramatis Personæ.

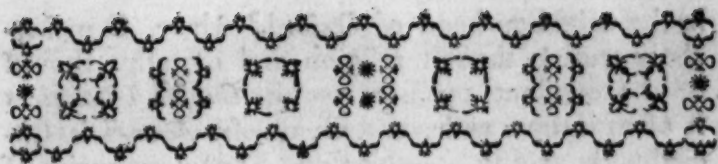
M E N.

SILVERSIDES, (a Citizen retir'd from Business)	}	Mr. HOLLAND.
Sir AMOROUS OGLE, (an old Debauchee)		Mr. DANCER.
FREELOVE, (nephew to Sir Amorous)	-	Mr. BANISTER.
SQUANDER, (an Officer)	- -	Mr. BROWNE.
SYRINGE, (a Surgeon)	- -	Mr. MURRAY.
TIPPLETEXT, (a Parson)	- .	Mr. POLLET.
SCAMPER, (a Rake)	- - -	Mr. MILLER.
WAITER	- - -	Mr. ROSS.
SERVANT	- - -	Mr. OWEN.

W O M E N.

LETITIA, (Silverfides' Daughter)	-	Mrs. RAWORTH.
LA ROUGE, (her Maid)	-	Mrs. MURRAY.





T H E
E X P E R I M E N T.

A C T I.

SCENE, *a Parlour in Old SILVERSIDES' House.*

Old SILVERSIDES meeting LETITIA.

SILVERSIDES.

LETTY, my dear, I am glad I have met with you, for I have excellent news to communicate.

LETITIA.

Have you, papa. Pray let me hear it then, for I want something to amuse me in my confinement.

SILVERSIDES.

Confinement! Ay, ay, you are ever grating upon that string. Is it not all for your own good, child, that I do it? Consider, I beseech you, are you not
A in

in the neighbourhood of Oxford? where, O melancholy truth! though religion and morality should be the constant practice, yet the *Cursus Theologicus* is often thrown aside, and Ovid's *Ars Amandi* is studied with avidity.—No, no, I know too much of the subtlety of our sex, and the credulity of yours, to trust a giddy girl any farther than the key-hole; therefore be content in your cage, and whistle away melancholy till I open the door, or resign you to another. In short, child, I intend very soon to have you married.

LETITIA.

Indeed, Sir, this is very sudden. I hope at least he may be a man of my own own choosing.

SILVERSIDES.

Own choosing, quotha; ha! ha! ha! a good joke truly; you'd make a pretty choice no doubt. Why now, pray, let's hear what sort of a husband would suit the delicacy of your taste? He must be a very jemmy gentleman no doubt, with buttons to his coat large enough to defend his body from pistol shot, like so many Scotch targets—A pair of buckles, fit for no straps but those of a coach-harness—Flour enough squander'd on his toupee to make puddings for a parish workhouse—A pig-tail as thick as a birchen broom—and to compleat the monkey, a yard and half of small sword by his side, which he suffers to grow rusty in the scabbord, for fear he should ever be put to the necessity of using it.—These are the husbands made choice of by the giddy, dressy young hussies of this age.

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LETITIA.

In this, as in other notions, Sir, not quite right, nor yet quite wrong. The ladies naturally give the preference to that class of men who shew them the greatest assiduity and attention, and it is equally natural for those to approve of dress in others who give into it themselves. Yet take my word for it, Sir, however the ladies may *conceal* their sentiments of such creatures as you have described, they hold them in as contemptible a light as you do.

SILVERSIDES.

Ay, child, you may think this is the case, but we have many, many proofs to the contrary; and I should be very loth, very loth to put the trial of it into your power. "Fast bind, fast find," as I often say; an excellent proverb, and 'tis pity it is not more regarded.

LETITIA.

I hope, Sir, you do not rank Mr. Freelove with the butterfly part of the creation.

SILVERSIDES.

Still worse, child; some of those butterfly gentry, as you term them, are rich; therefore passable for a son-in-law—but he's a beggar—How could he have the impudence to ask my permission to pay his addresses to you? Have I been handling the cloth-yard for these thirty years past, toiling and moiling early and late, to save money, and then bestow it on a fellow that's not worth a nail of packthread.—No, no, I have made my family rich, and I shall next endeavour to make it respectable.

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LETITIA.

Sir, a connection with George Freelove would do honour to any woman living: and as to his fortune, though the honest heart he possesses is more than equivalent to riches, yet you cannot be ignorant that the baronet, his uncle, is his guardian, and has a very considerable estate of his in possession.

SILVERSIDES.

Why, that's true, Letty, and there it may stay; for he has some how or other made away with the will, and never intends to part with a shilling of it. But I have some thoughts of getting at it through another channel, and at the same time of ennobling the blood of my posterity.—Ods my life! what though my grandfather carried a hurdy-gurdy for his subsistence, and his consort sold butter and eggs, a century ago, in Magpie-Alley,—yet many a flower flourishes at court whose seed has been pick'd up from a dunghill—ay, and thrives too.

LETITIA.

Very possible, Sir; but what relation has this to my husband that is to be? 'Tis cruel to keep me in suspense; and yet I think I can easily guess what sort of an animal he is, if 'tis a husband of your choosing.—Let's see; he has a countenance as invariable, and I dare say as ugly, as that of Hercules, whose brutish figure stands frowning on a pedestal in our garden—his locks, I suppose, hang downwards, in the plain simplicity of nature, without deviating from the strait line, or being in the least disfigured by powder—his coat is a cut of the last century—he enters the room with a—“Madam, how d'ye find yourself?”—turns his back to the fire,
talks

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talks of the rise and fall of stocks, and then struts out of the room—with the same formality he enter'd it.

SILVERSIDES,

Heyday, Miss Pert, don't let your tongue run at such an intolerable rate; you'll confess your mistake, and alter your tone, when I have told you who it is that I——

LETITIA.

Well, Sir, pray who is it?

SILVERSIDES.

In a word, huffy, what say you to be call'd Lady Ogle?

LETITIA.

Lady Ogle! Oh! hideous!——That loathsome wretch Sir Amorous, Freelove's uncle! that old worthless, treacherous, ensnaring——

SILVERSIDES.

Why, how now, Mistress Flippant?

LETITIA.

Oh! I hate the fellow, loath him, detest him; I have heard enough of him to be shock'd at the bare mention of his name: a musty old bachelor, a worn out fop, a——

SILVERSIDES.

'Tis false, you jade; he's a very worthy man, and a prodigious great favourite with the ladies;
and

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and as to his age, I'll hold a piece of gogram to three knots of stay-tape—No, I'll not neither; I'll follow king Charles's rules, "Lay no wagers"—but I am certain he's not more than sixty-five—a steady stober age, child.

LETITIA.

What, he has bid high for me, I suppose! Men now-a-days bargain for a wife, as they would for a painted Mandarin at a china auction: besides, how can the wretch have the assurance to make proposals to me, when I know he has done the same to our next neighbour, Miss Jasper? and many others, who he thinks may have vanity enough to be pleased with the prospect of a title. But I despise his offer, and will convince him, that I prefer merit, though in rags, to all the costly pomp and stately magnificence of the East.

SILVERSIDES,

Very fine truly,

LETITIA.

And sooner than consent to be his, I'll submit to be shut up in this prison all my whole life.

SILVERSIDES.

And shut up you shall be, till you learn a little more obedience. I am going to neighbour Callipash, to know how he does after his fit of the gout, and when I return I'll have a blacksmith to put more bolts on every door, and more bars on every window in the house: Ay, and the little stairs door where I caught you exchanging soft-whispers with that rakehelly dog Freelove shall be brick'd up; and then, Miss, I'll put your obstinacy to the test.

LETITIA.

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LETITIA.

As you please, Sir; there are no laws, human or divine, that oblige us to make ourselves miserable, and therefore——

Enter THOMAS.

THOMAS.

Sir Amorous Ogle's servant, with his master's compliments, that he is at home, Sir, and expecting you.

SILVERSIDES.

I'll wait on him immediately.

Exit Thomas.

LETITIA.

For heav'n's sake, Sir, don't think of listening to any proposals from him, for I positively never will.

SILVERSIDES.

His proposals are advantageous, I tell you; so adieu, Letty; take care of thyself, dear, and we'll soon see which shall get the better, thy stubbornness, or my positiveness. *[Exit.]*

LETITIA.

Say you so, Sir; if that's the case, we must put that matter to the trial. Now for a daughter's invention against a father's obstinacy——pretty well match'd methinks——there's nothing impracticable that a female undertakes. Let me see——first to get rid of the uncle, and secondly to prefer the nephew. As to the first——thanks to fashion, who sometimes takes

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takes offence at the impertinence of fops, and gives us the means of disappointing their curiosity—A calash rendered his view of me so imperfect, that 'tis impossible he can know me again in any dress: and as to the second, he knows too well how close a prisoner I am kept to dream of my having effected an escape. But, what for my disguise?—I have it.—La Rouge's habit, complexion, and language, will effectually secure me from a discovery. La Rouge! La Rouge!

Enter LA ROUGE.

LA ROUGE.

Madame.

LETITIA.

Did you see my father?

LA ROUGE.

Oui, Madame, and he vas in von terrible great a passion, come down de stairs two tree togedre, call me little French bitch, told me he vowd send me to my own country to live pon de frog et de la soup meagre.

LETITIA.

Ha, ha, ha! Pay no regard to his vile humours, they shall never affect you. Have you got the key of the little door that leads into the grove?

LA ROUGE.

Oui, je l'ai—I—I ave got it in my pockete.

LETITIA.

Good: I must make the most of my time.—I'll
not

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not only expose that old goat's villainy, but contrive a punishment for it: O rare female invention.

For sixty-five, when join'd to twenty-one,
Must thaw like icicles before the sun.

[Exit Letitia. Manet La Rouge.]

LA ROUGE.

Pauvre English ladi—vat shokin ting to be always kep en prison; no confessor to give de consolation spirituelle; dey be no use so in my contry; quite anoder ting, quite anoder ting.

[Exit La Rouge.]

Chamber in Sir AMOROUS OGLE'S House.

Old SILVERSIDES and Sir AMOROUS OGLE discovered.

SILVERSIDES.

You are right, Sir Amorous, very right; the jilts that abound in our days are to be won by nothing now but outside shew. You may remember, Sir Amorous, that fifty years ago, the females were not so —

Sir AMOROUS.

[Interrupting him] Ha, ha, ha, ha! I beg pardon, Sir, pon honor, but I laugh at your mistake, your memory is very treacherous: Fifty years ago—ha, ha, ha! No, no, no. [Taking snuff.]

SILVERSIDES.

Why, as I us'd to say, when I kept shop—a man is apt sometimes to measure other people's cloth by his own yard—to be sure you must be a good deal short of my age—and—

B

Sir

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Sir AMOROUS.

Pfha! ha, ha, ha, you make me laugh, by all that's comical you do, ha, ha, ha! Why, if you'll split a fifty my good friend, a—you'll come nearer the mark a good deal, ha, ha, ha!

SILVERSIDES.

Nay, Sir Amorous, you know any man may be mistaken in a point of this nature—I only meant to — — —

Sir AMOROUS.

No apologies, Mr. Silverfides, I beseech you; you are not the first who has made that mistake, I assure you; but it every day puts me in mind of that wholesome caution, "Not to judge by appearances."—Why, lord, Sir, all this you see [*stroking his face*] is mere sun-burn.

SILVERSIDES.

Really!

Sir AMOROUS.

Only thirty years old—as I hope to be kiss'd.

SILVERSIDES.

A bouncer that to my knowledge. (*Aside.*)

Sir AMOROUS.

Gad help you, before I made the tour of Europe, no lilly was fairer, no silk was softer than this skin of mine: but those damn'd scorching climates of Spain and Italy producing too great a relaxation of the surface, after a tight bracing from the frosts of Holland and Germany, my skin was left a little wrinkled,

wrinkled, as you see; but that's not to be wonder'd at, when a man encounters the fatalities of the torrid and frigid zones in the space of twelve months.—Lord, I remember my dear Mamma us'd to say, that her lovely Amorous had the whitest hand in the family.

SILVERSIDES.

His mamma! Oh! now I've hook'd him. (*Afide.*) Your mamma, Sir Amorous! Why, 'tis upwards of forty years since she died, for I walk'd at her funeral—eh!—how's that?

Sir AMOROUS.

Gad's curse the old Hottentot, but he has puzzled me! what shall I say! (*Afide.*) Why—why, Mr. Silverfides—eh!—these forty years did you say—I wish he was out of my house (*Afide.*)—Oh!—but you know my father had me by his second wife.

SILVERSIDES.

Second wife, Sir Amorous, why he never had one.

Sir AMOROUS.

Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*laughs affectedly.*] Why really, my good friend, you must have taken a potent draught of Lethe, or your nervous system being decay'd, your retentive faculties are totally destroy'd; but we will refer this point to be determined by the ladies; they are the best judges of the accomplishments of our sex.—No harm done you know—eh!

SILVERSIDES.

(*Afide.*) A great fool, I find; but his estate and title will make amends for that.

Sir AMOROUS.

Suppose we wait the decision of your sweet daughter, Sir: she'll judge better, I warrant you; he, he, he!—If ever I'm try'd, it shall be by a jury of the Fair Sex, and then, Mr. Silversides, I am sure of an acquittal.

SILVERSIDES.

Well, Sir, my daughter shall pronounce sentence; I have no objection in the world. Let me see——Half your estate for a settlement——Your offers are very fair, and you have my free consent, I assure you.

Sir AMOROUS.

And the ladies—I have the vanity to imagine I can command, he, he, he!—shall be proud of the honor of an alliance with your family——Dress, address, person, accomplishments, and the graces, you yourself must be convinc'd no woman can withstand, he, he!—I shall sit down before the fortress, and begin the attack to-morrow, when I have not the least doubt, after a few, a very few advances on my part, the lady will surrender at discretion.

SILVERSIDES.

Not so readily, perhaps, as you imagine, *Young Gentleman. (Aside.)* Well, Sir, I have the pleasure and satisfaction to wish you a good day.

Sir AMOROUS.

My dear father-in-law, health and happiness attend you; I'll take care your days shall close amidst a pretty prattling race of smiling cherubs, whose innocent chat shall smooth the brow of care, and make e'en age grow ——

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SILVERSIDES.

Take care, Sir Amorous, you don't protest too much.

Sir AMOROUS.

Never fear, papa: and makè e'en age grow wanton by gazing on their youthful gambols.

[Exeunt.]

Scene changes to another Room in Sir AMOROUS's House.

Enter LETITIA dress'd as LA ROUGE, introduced by a Servant.

SERVANT.

From Miss Silverfides you say, *[takes the letter.]* Please to wait a few minutes, and I'll inform my master. *(Exit.)*

LETITIA, *sola.*

And now for playing my part; and yet my nature almost shudders at the thought of trusting myself thus within the doors of such a wretch. What's here? *[looking at the pictures]* The three Graces—Jupiter and Io—the Rape of Proserpine—Symbols of the beastly disposition of their owner.—A writing table, with books; very studious no doubt, *[takes up a book]* The Quintessence of Chesterfield's Letters, by a Man of the Ton. But what's here? Manuscript, I vow. Pardon me, good manners, but I must peep: *[opens the book]* A pair of spectacles as I'm alive, ha, ha! Oh! the purblind dotard; *[reads]* "The Rake's Vade Mecum, or Man of Pleasure's Memorandum-Book." Schemes of gallantry under three different heads, very methodically dispos'd indeed; this discovery may be useful. But what's here? *[reads]*
"Saw

"Saw Silverfide's girl at church"—so—"the thing's well enough, but fearful of shewing too much of her face. N. B. Perhaps 'tis seam'd, or her eyes look different ways; if so—damme I'm off."—Wednesday, "Just been talking with Silverfides about Letitia." Mem. "A crazy old fool, and easily gull'd"—enough—enough—this will convince my father, or nothing will: but here the monster comes. [*Puts the book in her pocket.*]

Enter Sir AMOROUS.

Sir AMOROUS.

Gad's my life, a delicate piece by all that's amorous—ch!—why—where do you live, child, ch!—I do not remember to have seen your pretty face before—ch!—

LETITIA.

I live, Monsieur, with Miss Jasper, but de letter is from Ma'mselle Letitia. She beg me to carry it to you on purpose dat her papa not know.

Sir AMOROUS.

If that's the case, this must be a proposal to throw herself into my arms without the formality of a courtship.—Let's see.—(*Reads*)

"SIR,

"I have just been made acquainted with a proposal you have thought proper to make to my father, of paying your addresses to me; now as I am certain you have had the folly to boast of other engagements of the like nature, and as I know you to be a person of neither character, or principle, I hope you will listen

"to

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"to advice, and not pursue this ridiculous business any farther; for if you do, you will not fail to meet with an open affront, and a positive denial, from

"LETITIA SILVERSIDES."

Ha, ha, ha! what a little wasp it is!—He, he, he!—The proud huffy little thinks how I can be reveng'd upon her;—make her pretty well acquainted with my person and address by a few visits, then abandon her, and the little sinner dies of despair; he, he, he!—Well, but do you understand the contents of this letter, child, eh?

LETITIA.

No, Monsieur; I no understand vat you say——
(*hesitating.*)

Sir AMOROUS.

Why the girl's dying for me.—Do you understand English, child?—She writes me word, she is desperately in love with me.

LETITIA.

In love! I know vat de love is ver vell.

Sir AMOROUS.

Why the girl's over head and ears in love with me: this figure of mine will be the ruin of all the girls in Christendom!—Why, are you in love? um!—eh! Mrs.—what's your name?

LETITIA.

Why de Englis Gentleman be so ver pretty, and so engageant.

Sir

Sir A M O R O U S.

'Pon my soul, (*looking with his glass*) the girl's eyes are well enough ; and then they languish most confoundedly.—The chit's likely, rat me ; yes, yes, she must be mine.—Why, my charmer, you look delightfully : I like you, child ; nay, faith I love you.

L E T I T I A.

No, Sir ; you do love Miss Letitia : she be ver handsome lady.

Sir A M O R O U S.

Handsome ! 'fore Venus, ugly as sin, in comparison to thee. Handsome ! ha, ha, ha ! Why she squints most intolerably—has not a pretty feature in her face, by Jupiter :—But thou, why thou art as fair as a lilly, as blushing as a rose, the spicy gales of Arabia perfume thy breath, there's nectar on thy lips, honey on thy cheek, in short, thou art a combination of every thing that is delectable ! I adore thee, child ! I'll marry thee.—Where wilt thou bless me with thy company for a few moments ? where shall I see thee, eh ?—I'll meet thee to night in the wood, in the park, in the grove, in the street, or, or,—any where, thou dear, sweet, charming, adorable, heavenly creature !—When shall it be ?

L E T I T I A.

Not to night ; my mistress no go to bed before it be too late.

Sir A M O R O U S.

Too late ! 'tis never too late, charmer : night is the season for lovers.

“ The

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"The cloudy sky, and starless night,
"Conceal love's votaries from sight;
"As when two cats at midnight rove,
"And echo forth their squalls of love.

No, no, child, darkness hides all blushing between us, you know.—Well! eh! where shall it be? through the gate into the garden, eh, my angel?

LETITIA.

'Tis impossible dere; Mr. Jasper he always lock up de garden gate, and he take away de key.

Sir AMOROUS.

Indeed, my charmer! then I'll climb over the wall.

LETITIA.

Oh, Monsieur! you cannot do dat it is ver high.

Sir AMOROUS.

Never fear, my pretty Fleur-de-lis; I have a thing call'd a rope-ladder. Why, I'd scale the walls of a fortification to get at thee, thou dear, delicious, enchanting ——

Embraces her; at that moment enters Freelove.

FREELOVE.

Why, how now; uncle; ha, ha, ha! what, Venus and Saturn in conjunction, ha, ha!

Sir AMOROUS.

Damn the young dog, I wish he was in the deserts of Arabia with all my soul.

C

LETITIA.

LETITIA.

If he should discover me I'm ruin'd.

FREE LOVE.

Why, uncle, I'm afraid I've broke in upon your studies rather abruptly; but don't be afraid—I hate to spoil sport—ha, ha, ha!—A pretty piece, ha! uncle——“Under the rose—under the rose, we all love a pretty girl under the rose,” ha, ha!

Sir AMOROUS.

Why, you ungracious libertine, you shall repent this insolence; quit the room this moment.

FREE LOVE.

Uncle, don't you think sixty-five rather too languid to engage with that sprightly form? The odds are confoundedly against you. But, come let me behold your Venus, and then I'll tell you more of my mind. [*Offering to go to Letitia, Sir Amorous stops him.*]

Sir AMOROUS.

Sirrah, if you attempt to be rude, I'll cut you off with a shilling, you dog you.

LETITIA.

What will become of me!

(*Aside.*)

FREE LOVE.

But, uncle, I hope you have no serious views; if you have, you'll be a most egregious cuckold: remember I tell you so.

Sir

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Sir AMOROUS.

Get out of my fight.

FREE LOVE.

With budding antlers large enough for a buck's lodge.

Sir AMOROUS.

Why, you rascal —

FREE LOVE.

A dozen brats at your table, that would puzzle the heralds office to find out their genealogy.

Sir AMOROUS.

You impertinent scoundrel —

FREE LOVE.

All your ill-begotten pelf justly squandered on mantua-makers, friseurs, and milliners.

Sir AMOROUS.

Oh! that I had but my cane —

FREE LOVE.

'Tis very true; and so my dear hale, healthy, vigorous uncle, I leave you to finish your amorous parley.

For, oh! bright Venus, if before thy shrine,
Old Nunc should supplicate thy pow'r divine;
Relieve the object from that form-uncouth,
To melt and languish in the arms of youth.

[Exit Freelove.

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Sir AMOROUS.

A rakehell, vagabondizing, young dog.

LETITIA.

Oh!—dear—me be fright out of my ten vits.

Sir AMOROUS.

Don't be alarm'd, my pretty gilliflower; if I had but had my cane, I'd have laid him at your feet as flat as a flounder; But take this ring for a token of my constancy and love to thee, that I'll marry thee. —Zooks, thou shalt ride in a gilt coach—and out-shine every lady in the land.

LETITIA.

Sal I be de fine lady—oh! you be ver polite gentleman.—I fal depen pon you.—Adieu—Sir, your humble serviteur. [Exit Letitia.

Sir AMOROUS.

Adieu, my angel; farewell, my dear, adorable, enchanting —filly, credulous, painted, alabaster doll—and yet the outlandish animal is well enough. —This comes of studying the Graces.—No woman can withstand—all as easily vanquish'd as paper-castles with a pop-gun. As for my nephew, I'll soon get rid of him: he had the audacity to tell me t'other day, that my eyes were sunk in my head, and that I look'd for all the world like death's head on my grandmother's tombstone.—And now to think of saying a few elegant things in reply to madam Letitia's letter. She may flounce and bounce; but—he, he, he! I'll soon, very soon convince her, that neither she, nor any of her sex, are proof against the insinuating addresses of a gentleman, and a man of gallantry. [Exit Sir Amorous,

Scene changes to a Street before Sir AMOROUS's House.

Enter FREE LOVE.

FREE LOVE.

What a goat is this uncle of mine; an old tottering, infirm, ensnaring fop. What pleasure is there in seeing those lumps of decay'd mortality provide provender for us young fellows; we seize it with a double relish—Ha! by all that's lucky here comes the victim; now I'll see what sort of a piece she is—

Enter LETITIA.

I'll have a sight of her face in spite of the devil—
[*finding it to be, as he supposes, La Rouge, starts back*]
Ha! Letitia's La Rouge, by all that's droll, ha, ha, ha! Why, what the deuce has my uncle been fornicating with the maid instead of the mistress? ha, ha, ha!

LETITIA.

Out of the frying-pan into the fire. However, 'tis lucky he takes me for La Rouge—I'll humour it—
—Fi donc, Monsieur, for vy you be so rude.

FREE LOVE.

Rude! the devil's in the women of this age, they always construe gallantry for ill-manners.

LETITIA.

You forgot ven you meet me in de street yesterday, and put your arm 'bout my neck; ce n'etoit pas joli Monsieur—dat vas no pretty for de Englis gentil-homme.

FREELOVE.

THE EXPERIMENT.

FREE LOVE.

A just reproof strikes home from any tongue (*Afide*)—Why, that's very true, my dear, and was I in the same situation now, as I was yesterday, 'tis ten to one but I might take the same liberties again; but to tell you the truth, I was blind.

LETITIA.

Vous badinez, Monsieur; you joke—Vy you swear I look so ver handsome den?

FREE LOVE.

In such cases, I am always blind to the blushes of a modest cheek, and deaf to the calls of honour and the pleadings of innocence; for in my wine I never speak a single word that I can justify to myself in the hour of reason and reflection —

LETITIA.

(*Afide*.) Excellent man! Conviction is the first step towards amendment.

FREE LOVE.

In short, child, I am guilty of a vice which I despise in others, and which betrays me into actions of which my nature is ashamed; and had I not been at that time subject to its fatal influence, instead of wishing to betray your innocence, I would have been the first to cherish and protect it.

LETITIA.

He has a better heart than even my partiality for him made me imagine—Tank you, Sir, ver much oblige to you. [*Curtfying*.]

FREELOVE.

FREE LOVE.

Had thy sweet mistress, of whose dear image my charm-working fancy paints thee a resemblance, had she but half so ill an opinion of me as I have of myself, she would no longer listen to my addresses, but cast me off as a monster.—But how, in the name of wonder, came you and my uncle together?

LETITIA.

What shall I say now! (*Aside.*)—Vy, Sir, de Mamselle Letitia desire you you'd come to speak to her to-night—She send you dis key, et ven I ask for you, votre oncle—he keep me for—for make de love —

FREE LOVE.

Ha, ha, ha! Well, here take this, [*gives her a purse*] 'tis fit I make this apology for my ill treatment: be faithful to your mistress—bear her my tenderest love, for that is true, and all that's genuine in my disposition; tell her I'll not fail at the appointed time.

LETITIA.

Oui, Monsieur; votre serviteur.—Generous man! I like him more than ever.

[*Exit Letitia.*]

FREE LOVE.

Thou dear little talisman, that with thy magic touch so oft has op'd the way to joy and my Letitia, have I once more gotten thee. Why, what a happy, what a wretched man am I; happy in my Letitia's love, and wretched in not being able to deserve it: but I'll no longer be a slave to my passions, nor the dupe to a herd of profligates, whose company I am
asham'd

—I am'd of, and whose principles I despise. Well, let my old uncle go a wooing to all the servant wenches in the county, if he has no care for me, that's the very reason I should have the more for myself. Another apoplectic fit may tumble him into the grave; and me into the possession of my estate. —For when an old fellow, that is as dry and as stiff as a worm-eaten sugar-cane, plays the rake, how the devil can it be wonder'd at, if such an unguarded young fellow as I am plays the fool.

[Exit Freelove.]

Enter SCAMPER and TIPPLETEXT.

TIPPLETEXT.

Yonder he goes, by Jupiter.

SCAMPER.

Then, by Juno, I'll have him back.

[Exit Scamper.]

TIPPLETEXT.

Bravo, Scamper, take him prisoner, and bring him back in glorious triumph.

Enter SCAMPER and FREELove.

SCAMPER.

The devil in the dice, if you escape us now.

FREELove.

What a shocking thing it is a man can't resolve to alter his course of life, but some fiend or other throws a snare in his way to trapan him.

TIPPLETEXT.

THE EXPERIMENT.

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TIPPLETEXT.

Nay, no sermonizing, George; but thank thy auspicious stars that we have found thee: there will be rare doings this afternoon: the geniusses, my boy, are met. College prayers are over, and I've given the trencher-caps the bag, ha, ha, ha!

FREE LOVE.

That may be; but I can no more take pleasure in these scenes of riot and debauch; when I look back on my past folly, it covers me with confusion.

SCAMPER.

Damme, young Piety, where hast been? thou'lt shave thy pate next, and turn father confessor, ha, ha!

FREE LOVE.

Well, but joking apart, 'tis out of my power to attend you now, I am really going on business that—but my heart is with you—and—

SCAMPER.

Pray, George, how long hast thou commenc'd the man of business, ha!

TIPPLETEXT.

Pshaw, hang business. Come, George, no equivocation; dispel the mists that cloud thy brow, and chase away dull melancholy.

SCAMPER.

Bravo.—Why the devil don't you take your ghostly father's advice; he shall give you absolution

D

for

THE EXPERIMENT.

for all the sins you may commit this afternoon.
Won't you, young Clericus?

TIPPLETEXT.

Ay, and lump him a whole year into the bargain.

FREE LOVE.

There's no withstanding these sollicitations——so
have with you ——

Attempts to mend are vain, unless decreed,
For reformation is a work indeed.

[*Exeunt.*

End of ACT I.



ACT II.

SCENE, *A Tavern.*

FREELOVE, SCAMPER, TIPPLETEXT, SQUANDER, and
SYRINGE.

OMNES.

HA, ha, ha!

SQUANDER.

Right, very right; I agree with Scamper; Money
is a drug; circulation is the soul of trade.

SYRINGE.

[*Drunk*] Ay, and of health too; for when the
vessels are obstructed, and inflammation has taken
place, what can be more effective to remove the dis-
order, than — [hiccoughs.]

FREELOVE.

Taking another glass, ha! young Esculapius—
Pfha', damn physic; charge the glasses—Here's
confusion to all sentiment and reflection.

OMNES.

Bravo, bravo—ha, ha, ha!

SYRINGE.

I'll drink it, though 'twas in laudanum—yet I
D 2 have

28 THE EXPERIMENT.

have reflected many a sober, solid hour, but the charms of the bottle — [hiccoughs]

FREE LOVE.

Overcame all other charms, ha! Doctor. Come, here's church and state.

TIPPLETEXT.

I bar that toast—State, if you please; the church will take care of itself.

SCAMPER.

Will Friendly be here?

FREE LOVE.

No, hang him, he has no life in him, always ruminating, stupifying his brain with moral sentences; he was too wise when a boy to do any good. My bottle and las, as the song says, and a fig for the parson. [*Claps Tiptletext on the shoulder.*]

SCAMPER.

Now you mention the parson, sing us the song that was written by our deceased friend, young Bumper. I know, Squander, you're in cue, and 'twill enliven us.

SYRINGE.

Ay, the song by all means. Chearfulness is the principal ingredient of health; for when the nervous system is —

FREE LOVE.

O damn your phyfic—Squander sing.

SQUANDER.

SQUANDER.

With all my heart.

S O N G.

I.

Religion and phyfic, my friends understand,
As brothers agree, and take each by the hand:
We're beholden to them for our lives there's no
doubt;
The one brings us in, t'other ushers us out.

II.

But yet all our lives they together pursue us,
Our bodies and souls to protect and undo us;
Preach morality, temp'rance, and other such stuff,
Till grave master Death takes us off in a huff.

III.

With unanimous voice, then let us reject
Those foes to good humour, and never reflect:
The pleasures of life we'll for ever maintain,
And Parson and Doctor expel from our train.

O M N E S.

Ha, ha!

S Y R I N G E.

Songs that are adapted merely for mirth, ought to
be countenanced, but those that tend to the degrada-
tion of characters, should be exploded; for they are
as dangerous in the mouths of dissipated men, as
the tribe of narcotics in the hands of — hic, hic —

S Q U A N D E R.

Drunkards—ha! young Repetatur—

SYRINGE.

THE EXPERIMENT.

SYRINGE.

True, very true; inebriety in our profession is unpardonable; the life of the subject must not be sported with —

FREE LOVE.

Right, therefore be silent and wise —

TIPPLETEXT.

Fill the glasses, and may Venus be propitious.

OMNES.

A match — [*all drink.*]

FREE LOVE.

O Letitia! thy lovely image darts into my mind,
and imbitters these jovial hours.

SQUANDER.

Why, zounds George—growing pensive? Love's the tyrant of the heart, [*sings*] ha, ha! Come banish melancholy; love's the devil; I defy Cupid and all his train; here's my antidote. [*Sings.*]

S O N G.

I.

Let's be gay, and drink about,
Love will never tease us;
For, arm'd with wine, our hearts are stout,
Nor e'en can old age freeze us.

II.

Then fill the glasses, laugh and sing,
On earth 'tis what we covet;
With healths we'll make the welkin ring,
Till Gods above approve it.

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SCAMPER.

Ha! what Syringe asleep? If the major part of thy brethren were always so, the bills of mortality would decrease daily. What shall we do with him?

TIPPLETEXT.

Bury him, and I'll preach his funeral sermon.
(*All crowd about Syringe.*)

FREELOVE.

This is lucky: now to my appointment with Leticia. (*Aside, and exit.*)

SQUANDER.

What say you, George?—heyday! Waiter—
(*Enter Waiter*) where's Freelove?

WAITER.

Just now left the house, Sir.

SQUANDER.

Follow him instantly, and when you've hous'd him, come back and tell us.

WAITER.

I shall, Sir.

(*Exit.*)

SQUANDER.

Come, let's send Syringe home, and then take t'other glafs.

"For we're gayly yet, and we're gayly yet," &c.

(*Exeunt all singing.*)

Scene

Scene, the Street.

Enter FREE LOVE.

FREE LOVE.

Heavens! how irresolute a fool am I! to be led with my eyes open into folly, in the very height of repentance.—Oh! Letitia, thou hast sav'd me this once from the repetition of a crime I abhor; what double pleasure do I feel in this escape; why, I am quite a philosopher, a very paragon of resolution.—And now for joy, and my Letitia. *[Exit.*

A Chamber in SILVERSIDES's House.

Enter LETITIA and LA ROUGE.

LETITIA.

Well, thanks to thy assistance and disguise, my success hitherto has answered my most sanguine expectations; but still there's an after-game to play.

LA ROUGE.

O de ugly old dog—but, Madame, how ave you manage him!

LETITIA.

Oh! such gudgeons are easily caught; only gild the hook with a little flattery, and away it goes, bare or baited: in short, thus it has prov'd—so that next comes the punishment; his fetters are already forg'd, I assure you.

LA ROUGE.

Ver glad to hear dat; how you mean, Madame?

LETITIA.

LETITIA.

I tell thee, I have order'd John, the gardener, to lay down the large steel trap, that is used to trapan the fruit-stealers, close to the garden gate where he is to get over.

LA ROUGE.

Ha, ha, ha! de best tought in de varld—Begar it vil stick in his two legs. for de teeth be as sarp as one needle, and as long as my finger—ha, ha ha!

LETITIA.

Yes, I fancy 'twill effectually put an end to his courtship. It is chain'd to a staple in the wall, so that my handsome hot-headed swain shall cool all night, whilst his nephew more agreeably supplies his place.

LA ROUGE.

Ah! Madame, you be so politique, you ave de fancy so brillante, begar I shou'd like to hear him cry ven de teeth bite his legs—O! it vovd be char-mante—delectable—ha, ha, ha!

LETITIA.

Yes, I fancy he'll appear to great advantage when my father takes his morning's walk; for you know our garden gate joins to Mr. Jasper's garden wall, so that he will have little suspicion whose hands he is fallen into.

LA ROUGE.

Ha, ha, ha! I shou'd like to see his face ven your fader meet him in de morning. I vish it vou'd rain all de night; it vou'd kill him, et den his new-few vill get all his money.

E

LETITIA.

THE EXPERIMENT.

LETITIA.

Old Fools are the most incorrigible of all fools, and therefore the potency of the remedy should be proportioned to the violence of the disease. But my chief object in this undertaking is to convince my father of the villainy of the wretch's intentions, that he may no longer withhold his consent to marry me to Free-love, the man of my heart. [*A gentle knocking.*] As I live, there he is; run La Rouge, and let him in.

LA ROUGE.

Oui, Madame. O dis love be de ver fchockin ting.
[*Exit La Rouge.*]

LETITIA.

Now I'll have a little diversion with him about the purse; for I'm full of mischief to day.

Enter FREELOVE.

FREELOVE.

Dear Letitia, how happy am I in this blest occasion, which love and you have put into my power. I fly to seize a thousand kisses from those rosy lips, to breathe the raptures of a faithful heart—to—

LETITIA.

Hold, Sir; you're in heroics sure: I have a word or two to say before you go any farther.

FREELOVE.

Hold; and—Sir——What can this mean?

LETITIA.

LETITIA.

Don't be surpriz'd; I have an explanation in my pocket.—Free love, give me your hand. [*He reaches out his hand, and she puts his purse into it.*]

FREE LOVE.

Money, my charmer—No—'Tis generous in you, but you must excuse me: I—I—I [*looking at the purse*] Zounds, how came she by this?

LETITIA.

View it a little closer; though you may have but a slight acquaintance with the contents, yet I dare say you can recollect that in which they are contained. Have you ever seen it before?

FREE LOVE.

(*Aside.*) What the devil shall I say? I'm betray'd, undone by all that's—Why—a—a—as to recollecting it—yes—yes—certainly Letitia—I—I—do recollect the purse to be sure —

LETITIA.

Have you no idea, how, or to whom you parted with it? I have a particular reason for asking.

FREE LOVE.

(*Aside.*) Sure that devil of a French girl has not been blabbing—I'll venture however.—Oh! if—if you do insist on knowing this—this affair—you—you must understand that Bob Shuffle and I—had—had a game at cards—a—merely to pass away an hour last night —

LETITIA.

Have a care, Sir; you did not part with the purse till to-day, to my knowledge.

FREE LOVE.

To-day, my dear—hum! [*mus'ing*] a pretty pickle I'm in—I never can confess the truth (*aside*)—O true, very true—ha—ha, what a memory I have—Now I recollect—I—I—did not *lose* the purse at play—No, no, I *won* it from Bob—Bob's a very honest fellow—but he plays deep—confounded deep—

LETITIA.

'Tis very well, Sir, I know why you choose to evade this question. Oh! Mr. Free love, was it well done to make an attempt on the integrity of a young creature?

FREE LOVE.

Zounds! 'tis as I fear'd; the deuce take that French jade for her officiousness. (*Aside.*) I—I—you are misinform'd, the—the—Pray hear me—

LETITIA.

No, Sir, this proof of your falshood is incontestible, and therefore this meeting of ours shall be employed to no other purpose on my part [*affecting anger and agitation*] than that of rewarding your perfidy, by assuring you, it would be dissimulation in me not to confess [*smiling, and curtsying very low*] that I have a better opinion and a greater regard for you than ever I had in my life.

FREE LOVE.

Fore gad, this is half drowning a man to have the
pleasure

THE EXPERIMENT. 37

pleasure of bringing him to life again. Am I awake?

LETITIA.

Perhaps not, or you may be blind, which is the same thing; you're deaf sometimes you know.

FREELOVE.

(*Aside.*) My own words, by Jupiter; ay, that cursed jade has told her every thing.

LETITIA.

Who can venture with a man who is blind to the blushes of a modest cheek, and deaf to the calls of honour, because what he utters in his wine, goes for nothing in his intervals of sobriety.

FREELOVE.

Why, my sweet echo, how came you to know this? I have not seen you this week.

LETITIA.

[*Mimicking La Rouge*] O Monsieur, you do mistake mon ami, you mistake my friend.

FREELOVE.

Wonders will never cease—Why, sure you were not the French girl that —

LETITIA.

Most assuredly I am tho'. Nay, don't droop, George; I am very glad to find your faults merely the luxuriations of indiscretion that have no root, and with a little care may be easily weeded away.

FREELOVE.

FREE LOVE.

Believe, my dear Letitia, I will for the future regulate my conduct to your wishes.

Enter LA ROUGE.

LA ROUGE.

Madame, Madame, de old gentleman be catch in de trap. I hear him swear like de diable.

LETITIA.

My plot has succeeded——But, heyday! how did he escape?

FREE LOVE.

Plot!——What's all this, Letitia? I shall be discovered.

LETITIA.

Never fear; you'll shew to greater advantage than he will. Let us observe him from this closet. La Rouge, watch my father's coming home. [Letitia and Freeloove go into the closet; *exit* La Rouge another way.]

Stage Dark.

Enter Sir AMOROUS OGLE, limping and wet, with a handkerchief tied round his leg.

Sir AMOROUS.

Well, I am hous'd at last, after having suffer'd death in a thousand different shapes. No sooner did I disengage myself from the jaws of a steel-trap, than that damn'd fish-pond must lie in my way——
[*feeling*

[*feeling about*] dark, very dark indeed—No wonder I walk'd into it, when I had almost scratch'd my eyes out by stumbling head foremost into a holly-bush—Ay, there I suppose I lost my wig—I shall certainly catch my death, after my dipping.—Oh! that I had that French whore by the ears, I'd make her talk plain English with a devil to her.—I shall have this adventure proclaim'd through the streets to the tune of "Derry down," by every ballad-singer in the city. What shall I do? The light in this room proves that some of the family are up—when all are gone to bed, I may make my escape through a door or a window; till then I'll hide myself; there may be some closet in this room, where I may lie snug—Oh! here's one, Cupid befriend me—
 [*Opens the door, and discovers Freeloove and Letitia.*]
 Why, here's forcery and witchcraft—my nephew with a young lady! [*they come forth*] I'm undone! Why, George, who thought of meeting you here?

FREELOVE.

Nay, uncle, who thought of meeting you here?

Sir AMOROUS.

Why, George, misfortunes will happen.

FREELOVE.

True, uncle, you are a melancholy proof of that.

Sir AMOROUS.

But, George, do you know the way out of the house?

FREELOVE.

I know the way into it you see, Sir.

Sir

THE EXPERIMENT.

Sir AMOROUS.

Do, George, be good-natur'd and tell me.

FREE LOVE.

Why, Sir, there is one way out at the door, and another way out of the window: but, Sir, as difficulty and danger are the very souls of intrigue, I should think the latter most worthy the choice of a man of gallantry like you.

Sir AMOROUS.

But, Madam, [*to Letitia*] perhaps you can inform me; there is something so forgiving in those sweet eyes, that gives me confidence to ask this boon.

FREE LOVE.

Yes, Sir, very forgiving—Miss Letitia I dare say will. Sir, this is Miss Letitia Silverfides. Madam, [*formally*] this is Sir Amorous Ogle, my worthy uncle and guardian.

Sir AMOROUS.

(*Aside.*) Miss Letitia! then I'm try'd, condemn'd and executed.

LETITIA.

[*Curtfying very low.*] Sir, you do our house very great honour by this visit.

Sir AMOROUS.

(*Aside.*) Their house! Satan has been at work with a vengeance.

LETITIA.

LETITIA.

I am very sorry, Sir Amorous, my papa is not at home to receive you.

Sir AMOROUS.

A reprieve by all that's fortunate.

LETITIA.

Your business, I presume, Sir, was with my papa.

Sir AMOROUS.

Ye—ye—yes, Ma'am—I—I—a—came about a little particular business with my worthy friend Mr. Silverhides—b—b—but—as I am so unfortunate as not to find him at home—a—I'll do myself the honour of calling to-morrow—Would you please, Ma'am, to shew me my way out?

Enter LA ROUGE.

LA ROUGE.

Madame, madame, your fader just come home.
[*Surveys Sir Amorous.*]

Sir AMOROUS.

Nay then—drive away cart—for all's over. (*Aside*)

LA ROUGE.

Ha, ha, ha! vat is de matter—O my goot God! he ave been into de vater, ha, ha!

Sir AMOROUS.

O the Syren! Pray, Madam, pity my situation.—
Why, George—I say, nephew —

F

FREELOVE.

THE EXPERIMENT.

FREE LOVE.

O Sir, here's one will assist you; your worthy friend, Mr. Silverfides. But we'll retire into the next room, for fear of interrupting business.

LETITIA.

Oh! we would not interrupt business for the world, ha, ha, ha! [*All laugh and exeunt but Sir Amorous.*]

Sir AMOROUS.

Gad's life! yonder he comes—there's no resource but getting into this closet.—Lord send me out of the hands of these magicians, for there's nothing but enchantment going forward here I'll be sworn.—Heigh ho! [*Goes in.*]

Enter SILVERSIDES.

SILVERSIDES.

Did'nt I hear a noise this way?—Faith 'tis very right, as I us'd to say when I kept shop, "If the master's idle, how the dickens should the 'prentice work."—These giggling wenches will play their tricks when my back is turn'd.—'Tis a late hour to be sure, but the alderman's such good company when he gets into his pleasantries, that there's no getting away in any tolerable time.—However, I'll fasten my doors, and drive them all to bed; nothing like having all safe and snug, firm and fast, under lock and key.—Ay, ay—let Peter Silverfides alone for that—[*bawls*] Thomas, bolt all the doors—bar all the windows, Thomas. [*Going, is met by Squander and Tiptletext drunk; Tiptletext with a rope-ladder in his hand.*]

TIPTLETEXT.

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TIPPLETEXT.

Hic—hic—here am I, Sir, at your service.

SILVERSIDES.

How now, what's here?

SQUANDER.

Hollo, old fellow—I—I want to ask you a question, in the name of the company.

SILVERSIDES.

In the name of the devil, I want to ask you one; where do you come from?

SQUANDER.

Why that's very fair, old Steady Muscle, but damme if I know, nor where I'm going, and that's more—hic—

SILVERSIDES.

What, do you mean to rob my house? Who are you both?—Who are you, Sir? [*to Tiptletext.*]

TIPPLETEXT.

I am myself alone; are you any thing more?—Curse me—Let's have none of your sham. Tell us in which room Freelove is—A rope-ladder, see, here it is—"The high top gallant of his joy."

SILVERSIDES.

Why I'm thunderstruck!—That rascal Freelove here!

THE EXPERIMENT.

TIPPLETEXT.

Never fear, Old Buckskin ;—Your daughter's a sweet morsel.—Damme, I'll have her myself, rather than she shall lead apes in hell.—But where's Free-love ? we'll carry him to the font of Bacchus, and sconce him nine half pints at least.—

SILVERSIDES.

Sir, your insolence is intolerable. I desire——

SQUANDER.

Quietly, old gentleman, quietly ; always do things soberly, and with decorum.—I say now, suppose I should talk Latin to you, Old Domine, would you understand it ?

TIPPLETEXT.

Ay, *sumus*, that means—consume us.—But *nos*—we are—damnable drunk—um !—damnable drunk.

SILVERSIDES.

That I perceive, and therefore insist on your quitting my house immediately.

TIPPLETEXT.

Your house, is it ?—Well then, all I can say is, that we two gentlemen are your guests ; so the sooner you bring a bottle the better—hic—hic—

SILVERSIDES.

This is two much to bear.—Thomas, bring my pistols.—You are ruffians, and not gentlemen—

SQUANDER.

SQUANDER.

Not gentlemen!—Damme; who calls my gentility in question?—I bear the king's commission;—do you see that, you old idiot; (*points to his cockade*)—Next you shall feel this in your small guts, and then you'll be convinc'd I am a soldier.—Come on.
(*thrusts at him.*)

TIPPLETEXT.

Ay, put it through his lungs, and I'll bury the corps gratis; no surplice fees, not I—

Freelove rushes in, draws, and disarms Squander.

FREELOVE.

Hold your hand, madman.—Would you commit murder?—Eternal infamy be your portion.

TIPPLETEXT.

Here he is, *in statu quo*!—My dear George, I'm so glad that we have found you—you can't think.—Egad, we had almost broke our necks over a damn'd high garden wall, in coming to seek for you.

FREELOVE.

Are you not ashamed, thus to prostitute those talents which ought to be employed in promoting the practice of virtue and religion, instead of lavishing your time in one continual scene of irregularity and riot. And you, Sir, [*to Squander*] does not your king and country stand in need of your assistance? Is there no cause in which you can employ your sword, but in defence of your drunken squabbles? Take your sword, Sir, and learn that there is no character so universally detested, and so much to be dreaded, as a dupe to drunkenness.

THE EXPERIMENT.

SQUANDER.

Come, come, George—damn all quarelling—give us thy hand, my hero.

FREE LOVE.

Away, you have had it too long already; I disclaim all future fellowship with you for ever.

TIPPLETEXT.

So frumpish as all that!—Dammie, I'm off the turf.—None of your milkshops for me.—Come along, Squander.

SQUANDER.

Oh! you dolt, to be tied to a woman's apron-string—Oh! fie, Oh! fie, wear petticoats!—
“Wine does wonders every day.” [*Exeunt both singing.*]

Enter LETITIA.

FREE LOVE.

Now, Sir, you will no doubt wish to have an explanation of all these transactions, which seem to you so mysterious. Here is a lady will assist me in doing it.

SILVERSIDES.

Pray do, young man, and begin with telling me how you came here to make one of the performers.

LETITIA.

My dear, Sir, first satisfy me that you have receiv'd no hurt from the sword of that brute.

SILVERSIDES.

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SILVERSIDES.

Hurt, hussey; 'tis a miracle I had not my throat cut.—Why, I quiver every joint of me.

FREE LOVE.

I am truly sorry, Sir, you should be molested by those wretches, and yet I feel a secret satisfaction in being the happy means of rescuing your person from danger.

SILVERSIDES.

Ay, and in return for all that, you expect me to give you my daughter.—That's the burden of the song, I warrant.

FREE LOVE.

Sir, you have touch'd upon the master string of my best hopes.—Oh! Sir, if you knew the tender regard I have for her, which is such as must render her happiness dearer to me than my own, you would not withhold your consent a moment.

SILVERSIDES.

Why, that's all very loving, and very pretty to be sure: but remember, young man, you have an uncle, a man of fortune.

LETITIA.

Sir, if that's the obstacle, as I guess'd it would, something I have to say, and something I have to produce, will convince you how great a deceiver, and how poor a poltron you would have bestowed on —

SILVERSIDES.

SILVERSIDES.

Poor—Why he's worth fifty thousand pounds at least.

LETITIA.

You mistake my meaning, Sir.—But please to peruse that; 'tis his own hand-writing I assure you.

SILVERSIDES.

[*Reads*] “The Rake's Vade Mecum, or Man of Pleasure's Memorandum-Book.”—Why, I never heard of such a book.—Let me see. [*reads*] “Bow'd obsequiously—a—shall soon make a conquest there, without that horrid thing call'd matrimony—Schemes of ruin—hum—Talk'd with old Silverfides about Letitia.”—Old—I'm his humble servant for that though—um—um—A crazy old fool, and easily gull'd —

LETITIA.

What think you of that, Sir?

SILVERSIDES.

Think! Why, I think you won't find *me* so easily gull'd as you imagine—ha, ha, ha!—All a forgery, all a farce—A trick, a scheme of yours as sure as a gun—ha, ha, ha!

LETITIA.

Pardon me, Sir; I should scarcely use your name with such disrespect. But I have another proof—here's his ring, which —

SILVERSIDES.

SILVERSIDES.

Pshaw, pshaw! don't tell me of your rings—
'Tis all a trick I tell you.

FREE LOVE.

I am sorry it is not in our power to convince you; but, on my honour, 'twas he who planted that rope-ladder against your garden wall, in consequence, as he thought, of an assignation with Madame La Rouge; and, I assure you, he has been pretty well maul'd in the adventure.—Here he is, *in propria persona*, hid in this closet, in hopes of effecting his escape whilst you and your family are a-bed.—Shall I unkennel him?

SILVERSIDES.

Why, I'm all amazement!—Come, let's see him—
Mercy on us, what a pass the world is come to!

FREE LOVE.

[Knocking at the door.] Uncle, you're wanted; does it suit you to come forth?

LETITIA.

Sir Amorous—fir Amorous—My papa is here now; you had a little business with him, I think you said.

FREE LOVE.

Ay, Sir, a little business—Please to come forth and transact it. [Sir Amorous comes out of the closet] Perhaps, uncle, you can give us some account of that ladder—that ladder of ropes, uncle.

G

Sir

Sir AMOROUS.

Why, George—ay, true—ye—ye—yes—I—I do call it to mind, that's certain—(*Afide to Free love*) For heaven's sake, George, help me out of this scrape, and I'll give thee up half thy fortune to-morrow.

FREE LOVE.

Half my fortune! I scorn your bride, I'll have the whole; the laws of my country shall do me justice.

LETITIA.

Perchance, Sir Amorous, you may know that ring too. I had the honour to receive it from your own hand. Look at me now, and see if you think me as fair as a lilly, as blushing as a rose—Do the spicey gales of Arabia perfume my breath? Is there nectar on my lips, honey on my cheek?—Pray tell me if I have e'er a pretty feature in my face—perhaps my eyes look two different ways—I squint most intolerably—O, Monsieur, you look so handsome, et be so ver pretti gentleman—he, he, he!

Sir AMOROUS.

Yes, I cut a mighty pretty figure, truly.

SILVER SIDES.

Really, Sir Amorous, from the many testimonies of an infamous character that appear against you, I cannot hesitate to assure you, that even supposing your intentions towards my daughter had been honorable, I would not disgrace my family so notoriously as to receive you into it. One honest man—poor and untitled—is a greater ornament to society than a thousand noble villains. And the only at-
tonement

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tonement I can make my Letitia, for having listened to your addresses, is to give her to the man she loves.—Go, Sir, my doors are open to let you out, but never to receive you again.

FREE LOVE.

Uncle, this comes of studying the Graces—No woman can withstand the insinuating addresses of a man of gallantry—ha, ha, ha!

Sir AMOROUS.

Nephew, I most sincerely wish you and your lady as much future happiness, as this present moment affords me—Curse confound you all — [Exit.

SILVER SIDES.

Heed not his wishes; the Supreme delights in acts of goodness; and villainy, though cloth'd in embroidery, will meet with punishment as well as ridicule.—Come, my children, to-morrow shall see you united; I have acquir'd a fortune, and it shall be the pleasure of my age to see you enjoy it.—Things in this world carry a double face, and there is no coming at the knowledge of vice, or discovering merit—without making the Experiment.

F I N I S.

Errata in some of the copies.

Page 23, line 19, for disposition read composition. Page 24, last line but one, for friend read fiend.

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No. _____

What time this boy (Blw) passed from I will not
know. I only saw him at the time he was
seen. He was looking at the ground.

— by the pleasure of your eyes to see you enjoy it —
and there in this world carry a double life, and there
is no counting as the knowledge of vice, or discovery
of its evil — without making the experiment.

There is a lot of the copy.

